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HOME COURSE IN MENTAL SCIENCE.

BY HELEN WILMANS.

LESSON FIFTEEN.

PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUALITY.

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LESSON XV.

Man is the spokesman of Love, or Life, and being a purely mental creature he speaks it in the measure of his understanding of it.

The idea that would make nothing of man is one of extreme foolishness. Man stands at the head of nature, and is absolute in his position. It is man who leads the Life Principle forth into visibility. It is man who projects the Life Principle into effort, and who thus builds the world into a world of uses.

This visible world is not nothing; nor is it an unimportant something; it is Love, or Life, in manifestation. It is the mind side, or the intelligent side, of Love, or Life, just as light is the illumination of heat, or the showing forth of heat.

From this it becomes at once apparent that Life, or Love, the vitalizing principle, is one with its manifestation, man; and that its manifesta-

tion is as important as the unseen, vitalizing principle itself. Man is the visible and audible side of the Law of Life. The Law of Life is the unseen side of man, as heat is the unseen side of light.

The Law is subjective man. Man is the Law in objectivity. Let the student always hold this sentence in his memory. Nothing will ever help him to a realization of his true relations to the Law like this one little sentence.

Do not confuse the Law with the spirit, or thought life, of the man. Though man's spirit, or thought life, is subjective when spoken of in relation to his visible appearance, yet when spoken of in relation to the Law, it too, is objective. The thought life, or spirit, is objective to the Law because it is the externalization of the Law, the same as man's body is, but it is subjective to the man's body because it is invisible to our present power of seeing, and can only be made visible, or objective, by the intelligent permission of the body—the external, or objective, mind.

But the Law is forever subjective to the entire man. It is subjective to the man's subjective part of himself, as well as to his objective, or visible, part.

The Law, being subjective, or unseen in the entire man (body and

thought) is always latent in every part of him. No matter how sunken or low the man may appear, be sure of this, that the Law of Life, or Attraction, with all its mighty possibilities is latent within him, and can be brought forth by recognition. And not only by his own recognition but by the recognition of others. As the Law of Life is pure goodness and infinite greatness, being the all of love and justice, therefore the man is good and great even though he does not know it, and though not a soul on earth should be able to see it. For the Law is omnipresent, it fills all space and everything in space; not a single object can escape its indwelling power.

The Law in man is justice, and love, and health, and strength, in one pure vital flame. "In it is no variableness nor shadow of turning." The Law with all its infinite possibilities is not only latent in men who are pronounced altogether bad, but it is latent in the most diseased of human beings. It is latent in one person as much as in another, and there is no case in which recognition will not bring it forth and establish its goodness, and greatness, and strength, and beauty, in these human bodies.

To recognize the Law in latency in a human being is to bring it

forth, or to make it manifest. And when we have brought it forth by our power to recognize it, what do we see?

We see the Law itself in expression in man. Every trace of his disease, or of what we called his immoral nature, is gone. For the Law cannot manifest itself in disease, because it is Love's very self, the true essence of Life.

The Law of Life is latent in man. Man is the Law of Life in motion, as it were. He is the acknowledgment of its existence. He is the showing forth of it. He *is* it organized and made visible through his individual prerogative of recognition.

The Law, organized and become visible in all the objects of nature, culminating in man, is thus made available in uses. If there were no uses to serve, then the Law might exist as a living principle, filling all space, and man would be unnecessary. But because life is expressed in organized forms it must necessarily consist of uses; and man leads the power of the Law forth, as it were, into them. He calls the Law forth into activities. And what would life be on any plane divorced from its activities.

"Man is God's necessity" quite as much as God is man's necessity.

In scientific language: Man is the Law's necessity as much as the Law is man's necessity; for the seeming two are one. It requires this seeming two to constitute the one infinite life that we call the universe—this life which is subject neither to disease nor death.

We all know that the Law of Being is not diseased, and cannot die. It therefore follows that the Law and man being one, man cannot be diseased and cannot die. Never mind the reports of your senses to the contrary; they are not to be trusted in the face of such overwhelming evidence. The senses have deceived us always. The senses belong to the negative pole of man's organization and will never be trustworthy until they have received the higher education from the positive pole of his being—namely, his reorganized and intelligent brain.

Thought is the creator so far as visible creation is concerned. Thought is the product of the brain and of the external senses. The senses belong to the negative pole of the man and had their origin during the period of his unconscious growth, and before the last and best product of the man, his brain, was as nearly perfected as now. The brain is the latest product of human evolution, and is king by divine right. Thought is the product of the brain and is inseparable from it.

Indeed it acts in the capacity of messenger for the brain, or servant to it.

Thought has actually built our bodies into what they now are, with all their imperfections. Thought has planted the seeds of their imperfections and their diseases in them, and has watered and cultivated them there.

In a former lesson I showed that thought was the body-builder; that thought, prompted by desire, or expressed in desire, has built all the bodies we see in nature, and no two of them exactly alike, because no two have had desires exactly alike. Certain types of thought, or desire—circumscribed by certain environments—have produced types of animals and plants in nature, but no two members of the same brotherhood have ever been entirely alike, because none have thought and desired entirely alike.

Let us now imagine the time when man had his individual beginning as the tiniest spark of intelligence, or the faintest glimmer of a consciousness of Love, or Life. This small perception of the Love or Life Principle constitutes the personality of the individual—not the Law of the individual's existence, which is absolutely unimpeachable in its perfect-

ness, but the individual's consciousness, or his conscious perception of the Law; his individual estimate of the Law; which estimate has always fallen far below the Law's true capacity. But it is this individual estimate, whether adequate or inadequate, to express the true worth and glory of the power of the Law that constitutes the man's personality.

The man's personality is the man's own estimate of himself. Or rather, the race's personality is the race's estimate of itself, for individual cases are often exceptional. The race's estimate of itself, which is its estimate of the power of the Law, forms an atmosphere of thought—of ignorant thought so far—into which all children are born, and to which all are subject until such time as individual intelligence awakens and thinks itself out of race beliefs into the freedom of more positive truth.

The student must now begin to see the difference between a man's personality and his true individuality. His personality is made up of his inherited beliefs concerning himself. His individuality is something quite different from his personality. It is only now in process of evolution. While his personality has been built up in a great measure by the thought which sanctions the crucifixion of his desires, his individuality, when he shall have achieved it, will be the externalization in the flesh of

his desires. Therefore the man's present personality is his false self. His individuality, when it becomes established, will be the real and true man.

The bible says, "As a man believes so is he." This paragraph refers to man's personality alone. In another part of the bible Jesus asks: "Said I not ye are gods." This last expression refers to the true individuality of the man.

Man, as to his personality then, is what he believes himself to be. His personality is that part of him that he shows forth. It is his person. It is what we see when we look at him. Possibly the man we look at has a shortened limb and goes on crutches. This disfigurement is no part of the man's true individuality though it is a part of his personality.

But how can a man's personality diverge so far from his individuality?

His personality is an inherited thing. It is the inheretance of ages of belief in the old idea that God made man, and that man had to accept the situation and try to be thankful for it—no matter how disagreeable it was. It is the inheritance of ages of belief in man's weakness and

dependence on a power outside of himself, and of his consequent ignorance of his own latent power.

Man, as a growing creature, had to pass through the conditions and beliefs that make up his present personality. These conditions and beliefs are the negative pole of the conditions and beliefs that constitute his individuality. In other words, the man's personality is the negative pole of his individuality; and in the process of his growth it was absolutely necessary for him to pass through the negative pole in order to reach the positive pole of individuality. There is no way by which any one can attain any positive truth whatever except by going through its negative pole first. The negation of a truth, or the denial of it, proves the existence of it, and puts us on the right road to find it. The negation, or denial of a truth is the roots of that truth; and the limbs, leaves and branches, flowers and fruit, which are its positive pole, are sure to appear in time.

Man, as to his personality, has scarcely advanced at all for thousands of years. The ancient Greeks, though no further advanced in individuality than we are, yet had better personalities. They made the development of beauty a specialty, and they therefore presented a better bodily

appearance than we do. However, this fact serves no purpose in these lessons except to show the relation of thought to the personality.

No doubt the general tendency of the race through all these centuries, when it has seemed almost stationary, has been toward the development of intelligence up to the point where unconscious growth would be merged in conscious growth, and the race be enabled to take hold of itself, as it were, and do its own growing. But generation after generation has been born and died, and the great conception has only taken place within the last few years—the conception of the fact that conscious growth is a possibility to us.

Conscious growth involves the necessity of knowing how to grow. It involves the necessity of understanding the law of growth. And the race could not advance from personality to individuality until it had learned that all growth was based upon the Law of Attraction, and that this Law was expressed in the creature as desire. In proportion as it learns this great fact it will begin to trust its desires; by the doing of which it will lay the foundation for its individualization. And in proportion as it trusts its desires it will begin to disbelieve its old, inherited beliefs. In this way its personality will gradually change to individuality.

Now the purely personal man is no man at all. He is a bundle of inherited beliefs. He has no character. That which appears to be his character is not actually his. It does not stand upon its own foundation of reason. It simply stands upon hearsay, and it is a very weak thing. And yet it is one of the most obstinate and immovable things imaginable; and it is this simply because it does not stand on the basis of its own reasoning powers, nor of any reasoning powers whatever. It is what it is, because it is what it is. It believes the things it does believe, simply because it is the petrification of those beliefs. It can give you no reason for anything, and it therefore furnishes you no hold upon which you can insert an awakening thought. It is little better than an automaton. It goes through life like its father and grandfather did; and about the only purpose it serves is that of an almost impregnable impediment to those who have begun to think outside of the old fossilized beliefs, and who are thus manufacturing character for themselves that will in time mark them as distinctly individualized.

To develop the truth that will lift man from the personal to the individual life will require all the space I shall occupy in the forthcoming lessons. That there will be a good deal of repetition is a matter of

course. For these lessons are in almost diametrical opposition to the cut and dried beliefs of the whole race, and the great difficulty will be for the student to unlearn his present beliefs in order to learn the new and saving ones. If my students were children with minds as unwritten as fair blank paper, I could readily plant the seeds of this mighty and only saving truth in them, but they are not children; they are already mature in erroneous beliefs. Their minds are like gardens overgrown with many weeds, and the weeds must be pulled out before the new seed of this wonderful and ever growing truth can spring up and make much headway in its new soil.

The teacher of such royal truths as these of Mental Science is the veriest iconoclast. He is the image breaker of the age. He must of necessity antagonize old race prejudices, and for a time produce confusion in the mind of the student. Life, in its coming, stirs up commotion. It is only death that is quiescent; only stagnation that works peace. "Keep me out of still water," is the prayer of the truth seeker. Christ, who knew the effect of truth, said: "I come not to bring peace, but a sword."

Almost the whole world is in still water. Those who are immersed

in this deadly quiet are satisfied to remain there. They partake of the deadness of thought that surrounds them, and are virtually dead themselves. "Leave us alone to our slumbers," is their cry. But the student of Mental Science must expect to be shaken as with the trump of doom; for these great truths bring life, and life means activity. It means effort. It means the awakening and unfoldment of every faculty, many of which no man as yet dreams of possessing.

I say the whole world lies slumbering in the lap of ignorance, and its slumber is so deep and profound that its awakening will be like bringing the dead to life. Therefore the student who feels in himself the first thirsting for this great truth must keep his eyes steadily fixed on its revelations. He must never look back to the old sheltered nook where his former companions are lying at ease. He must understand once for all that the quiet place where they are resting is in the shadow of the deadly Upas tree, whose very atmosphere is death. If these companions will not come with him, he must come alone. It is the only way he can save himself; and eventually he will see that it is the only way in which he can save them.

In entering, therefore, upon the study of the Law of Being, which

means nothing less than absolute conquest of disease, old age and death, the student must resolve to be held by no preconceived prejudice, no result of any early training, but to follow where truth leads, and to do it boldly.

Years ago, before I had heard of this great science, I found out that truth only gave itself in exchange, as it were, for him who sought it. Truth and the one who seeks it will sustain the relation of lovers to each other. They will give reciprocally. The more we give ourselves to truth the more truth gives itself to us. And there is no freedom except in truth. Since all our fetters are of ignorance it is truth alone that makes us free. For, remember this great fact, that truth is actual life, and expresses itself in flesh and blood; thus renewing our bodies more and more, daily.

I have made these statements in order to give the student courage as he pursues the truth. It takes a bold man or woman to break loose from the thralls of a world's ignorant opinions, in which he or she has been held so long, and to launch boldly out in pursuit of something untried, simply in the hope of discovering more soul-satisfying food than they have had before. There is a letting go of the old before the new is

reached, and there is nothing but faith to bridge the two conditions. For my own part I had long seen that there was nothing in the old, and I did not fear to venture toward the new. I felt that I had nothing to lose and everything to gain; and the result has justified my belief. I know that I am standing on firm ground now. And it is a world-wide space, and a sure foundation—no less a space, no surer a foundation than a knowledge of the splendid faculties latent in men, the investigation of which will make them manifest, and bring heaven to light right here on earth.

Heaven is surely within. To recognize this fact little by little is to bring it forth into our every-day uses and thus to make play of all the work that now so loads us down and smothers us.

Therefore I say to the student, do not hang back from a thorough investigation of this study because your creed-bound neighbors are afraid of it. The creeds had their origin in the race's infancy, and are as unsuited for the race to-day as jew's-harps and marbles are unsuited for grown-up men. Come with me into each new position as I shall lead you forward, and use your own judgment concerning its correctness.

There is no doubt but you will meet with much criticism from your

friends. They will believe you to be on unsafe ground, and will think that you are jeopardizing your soul. Their influence may even alarm you and cause you to ask yourself if you are really sinning in what you are doing. Then stop and investigate the question, "Am I a sinner?" Take the orthodox ground in answering the question if you wish. The orthodox say that God is all in all; that there is no space where he is not. Now God is absolute good; sin is an impossibility to him. He is in you. If he fills all space he must be in you, and he must be in you as pure goodness. Therefore you are not a sinner. You cannot be a sinner. You may believe yourself to be one, but it is not so.

So you see that taking this thing from an orthodox standpoint you have logically proved that you are not a sinner. You can commit many errors, you can make many mistakes, but they are not sins, no matter how terrible they are.

This spirit of Life within us—the Law of Being—that I have called God in the foregoing paragraph, is capable of yielding us all truth; but unless we seek the truth we will not find it.

Truth is the knowledge of Being; seek this knowledge and you become clothed with the power of knowing. Therefore if ever the

question, "Am I really a sinner?" arises in your mind, go alone, holding fast to the statement that all is good, and wait until the answer comes. It will come, and when it comes it will come in these words: "If all is good (God) you are not a sinner, and there are no sinners."

To accuse yourself of being a sinner, or to accept the accusation as it comes from your more ignorant friends, is the first step in Mental Science where you will feel the very foundation of your old beliefs shaken under you, and you may for the time be frightened—frightened to think that you are not the sinner you believed yourself to be; frightened to think that you are not standing in the position of danger you had once seen yourself in; frightened at the wide area of freedom that is opening before you.

And now one word about freedom. Although it is the goal of happiness to which all our aspirations point, yet secretly the race fears it, and prefers its bonds rather than trust itself within its unfettered dominion. The reason the race fears freedom, even while longing for it, is because it has been encouraged to believe in its own weakness instead of its strength. And believing in its weakness, it recoils from the freedom that requires and indeed compels one thing of every soul

who would enter her sacred precincts; and that one thing is self-trust—the self-trust that enables a man to stand alone in the dignity of a consciousness of his own worth. We may long for freedom until the earth covers us, but until we achieve the erect position of self-conscious worth we will never obtain it.

The character of Luther never made much impression on me until I saw a portrait of him. Then in that grand, resolute old face, every line of which betrayed the courage of true individuality, I beheld the spirit that “would go to Rome though the very tiles on the house tops turned devils to oppose him.” And I saw more than the individuality of Luther in the picture. I saw my own individuality, and was a stronger woman from that hour. I felt more than ever the spirit that would not conform—the spirit that dared stand by my own desire and clothe it with my new beliefs; beliefs born of my own brain, in repudiation of my father’s beliefs which had clothed me, but which would clothe me no longer.

What a mighty thing a man is when he catches a glimpse of the true spirit in him and begins to live from it; when he sees his desires and justifies them, and puts his faith in them until they come forth

individualized, to set aside the poor, characterless personality he was born into. When a man stands by the spirit of himself—his desires—he is strong; he feels the magnitude of the moving power within him; he begins to know himself. It was not himself that he had known when dwelling in his inherited personality, but now he is no longer held back by his former nothingness. He recognizes the fire in the engine of his existence and he prepares to move forward in the direction of freedom. He steps forth to take his place on the apex of all external life, and the universe crowns him monarch of all.

In reading over the above I recall the bondage we are under to the small things of life. The majority of women, for instance, scarcely know how to make a dress until they find out how Mrs. Smith, or Miss Jones, or Mrs. Brown, made her last new gown. I am not in favor of entirely ignoring the fashions in dress, nor in making one's self conspicuous in small matters, but to be afraid to exercise one's own opinion for fear somebody will speak of it measures an amount of servitude that is appalling to think of. And so, perhaps as good a denial as any other can be based on this little illustration, and here it is:

"It makes no difference to me what other people wear, or what they

think of my wearing apparel. I shall consult my own preference in this matter. I love to dress tastefully and with ease to myself, and adaptability to my pursuits. At the same time I do not wish to run conspicuously against the established fashion. I have taste in dress peculiar to my cast of mind, and probably peculiar to my style of appearance, and I must honor this taste to a certain extent because it is part of my individuality; but whatever I do I shall do it of myself and for myself, quite independently of the opinion of others."

Here is a first step taken in self-assertion against the social opinion that makes slaves of us all. Next, in the matter of religion, declare that no man, ordained or unordained, shall do your thinking for you. Claim boldly the privilege of making your own mistakes in the development of your own intelligence. This is a bold step, and brings a big reward. It is a great conquest when a man can face the people with a resolution like this.

Once, in a creed-bound community where I, too, was creed-bound, it came to my ears how a man in a neighboring village had stood up in church and told all the people how he could no longer join in communion with them, but must withdraw himself from them. He said he had

changed his opinion. He had ceased to believe in a personal devil and a vengeful God. He could not help this, he said—belief was not a matter of choice with him—and he hoped his dear brothers and sisters, among whom he had been born and had grown to manhood, would not bear him any hard feeling, for he was sure of one thing, that since the terror of hell fire and the fear of an angry God had fallen away from his mind that he loved every one of them a hundred times more than he had ever done before, and that the whole world, down to the flowers and insects, seemed dearer to him.

This went the round from mouth to mouth among the ignorant people, many of whom pronounced him a devil incarnate. Being a child myself, I naturally accepted the popular verdict concerning him, and my imagination had no difficulty in fitting him out with cloven feet and horns. Several years afterwards I saw him. And what a man! With no more education than those about him, he had been constructed entirely on different principles—a mammoth head, features of indescribable beauty, a faultless form—his entire appearance that of a Greek god. A man so nobly balanced and so just that all people, far and near, came to him to settle their disputes, instead of resorting to law.

What a lesson the sight of this man was to one of my age then, coupled with the words I remembered that he spoke!

The affirmations for lesson fifteen are something as follows—the student may vary them to suit his special needs: “I am stronger in my own selfhood than I would be by merging my selfhood with that of a thousand other people.

“One man can be stronger alone if in the consciousness of true individuality, than a thousand men combined who are destitute of such consciousness. Therefore,

“Resolved, That as I cannot lift men to this consciousness all at once, I will in the meantime stand alone, and thus get the measure of my own strength.

“I will stand on my own belief of what is right and nothing but honest conviction shall swerve me.

“I will not thrust my opinions upon other people, nor antagonize them purposely, but I will carefully hold them to my own mental statement of Being; namely, that all men are great and good even though unknown to themselves; and thus shall I behold the seed sown in silence and darkness spring up to life and light, until they too shall stand in the

noble individualization of the true human magnet, and be able to wield the power such a position commands.

"At each moment when the old habit of ignoble concession tempts me I will remember that the world needs men, not things; and I will stand by my manhood—stand by the best I know, not in querulousness, but in the strength that shows forth in justice and love.

"I will at all times hold my thoughts firmly to the conviction that I can make myself to be anything I choose; also that I choose to be more and to know more than any human being has ever been or known.

"Having taken my stand as a believer in my own eternal progression, I shall proceed to push ahead past all the beliefs in sin, disease, and every form of weakness simply by claiming what I want, and expecting to receive it.

"I shall go over the arguments laid down in these lessons until I know at least something of my own worth and power, and have begun to feel the mental strength that comes from such a knowledge. And as mental strength is physical strength, I shall thus establish this personal me as firmly and nobly in the external world, as the individual me is already established in the inner life. I shall bring forth the inner me and make it personal, or externalize it.

"I shall remember constantly that the more firmly I hold for myself, knowing that there is nothing too good for me, the stronger and healthier, the happier and more prosperous I shall be, until I feel myself gradually becoming an irresistible power for every form of good.

"And so shall I be builded into a glorious magnet, and come understandingly into the potency of the Law."

